

Month Extension Petition to reset the deadline for response to the Official Action to and including September 23, 1999. In view of the above amendments and within remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has rejected claims 2, 5, 6, 7 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The Examiner states that the phrase "said end plate", i.e., in claim 2, is vague and indefinite since it is unclear which of the end plates is being referred to. Applicants have amended claim 2 to overcome the Examiner's rejection. With respect to Applicants' independent claim 32, Applicants are of the opinion that the claim is in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In this regard, it is believed that reference to such claim was inadvertent by the Examiner, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has also made reference that the specification must reflect the terminology used in Applicants' claim with respect to the limitation of "a gasket including an adhesive." Applicants have amended the specification on page 14, line 37 to make reference to the fact that the phrase "an adhesive tape-like gasket" is the same as a gasket including an adhesive. No new matter is considered by this revision to the specification nor amendment to claim 1, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Turning to the Official Action, claims 1-33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki, et al., Japanese Patent No. 8242526 in view of Nimiya, et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,933,512. The Examiner states that Sasaki, et al. discloses all of Applicants' claimed features except for a gasket including an adhesive between the end plates and the sleeve. To this end, the Examiner refers to Nimiya, et al. as showing a gasket 60 including an adhesive between the end

plates 40 and the sleeve 20. In the Examiner's opinion, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the closure of Sasaki, et al. by incorporating a gasket including an adhesive between the end plates and sleeves, as taught by Nimiya, et al. in order to increase the sealing capabilities between the plates and the sleeves, and to provide a secondary sealing means between the plates and the sleeves in case the inherent sealing capabilities of the plate fail. In view of the within remarks, the Examiner's rejection is considered traversed and should therefore be withdrawn.

Turning to independent claim 1, such claim has been amended wherein the end plates are provided with a sealing member (see element 26 in Fig. 9) on their outer periphery surface, and the adhesive gasket is arranged on the outer periphery surface by adhesion while conforming to the outer periphery of the end plate and the sealing member. This feature further distinguishes Applicants' claimed invention over the combination of Sasaki, et al. and Nimiya, et al. In this regard, Nimiya, et al. merely discloses the use of an elastic tape 60 which is wound around the outer portions 42B of the end plate as best shown in Fig. 5. To the extent one would even consider using the elastic tape of Nimiya, et al. in the closure of Sasaki, et al., one would simply dispose the elastic tape between the circumferential portion of Sasaki, et al.'s end plate and sleeve. There is no suggestion in Nimiya, et al. of arranging the elastic tape as claimed with respect to Applicants' adhesive gasket so as to be conformed to the outer periphery of the end plate and the sealing member.

By way of example, this is disclosed in Fig. 9 of Applicants' application. As described in Applicants' specification, page 16, lines 4 et seq., the conforming of the

adhesive gasket to the sealing member provides air-tightness between the end plates and sleeve. This feature of Applicants' claimed invention is neither taught nor suggested by Nimiya, et al., i.e., an adhesive gasket conforming to the periphery of the end plate and the sealing member. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection is considered traversed and should therefore be withdrawn.

Contrary to the Examiner's position, Sasaki, et al. either alone or in combination with Nimiya, et al. does not render obvious certain of Applicants' claimed features. Regarding claim 3, referring to Fig. 6 or Fig. 20(b) of Sasaki, et al., there is no disclosure of a third rigidity holding member which is detachably fitted in the cable guide hole as claimed, see elements 25 and 20, respectively, in Applicants' Fig. 7.

Regarding claims 4, 11-21, 32 (independent) and 33, though Sasaki, et al. discloses a cable clamp including a clamp body having curved holding members 17, the recessed portions of the clamp body and curved holding members are each formed on an inner surface thereof with a plurality of projections for biting into a sheath of a cable, as shown in Fig. 17. Sasaki, et al., therefore, does not disclose Applicants' claimed holding spacers 33 (see Fig. 14), as specifically claimed in these claims.

Regarding claim 7, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose a holder 31 provided on the end plate 3 and formed with a recess 30, and a projection 40 of the cable clamp 4 adapted to fit in the recess 30, as claimed in this claim, see Applicants' Figs. 8 and 12.

Regarding claims 9 and 10, each of the screws 19 of Sasaki, et al. is threaded into the clamp body 16, and thus Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 14, a pivotal element 19, into which the screw 19 is inserted and

which is pivotally supported on the clamp body 16, as claimed in claims 9 and 10.

Regarding claim 22, Sasaki, et al. discloses a pair of hinge mechanisms each constituted by a hinge hole 28 and a hinge rod 27 and a plurality of buckles 30. However, the hinge mechanisms 27, 28 and buckles 30 are different from the hinges 60 and fasteners 70, as claimed in claim 22.

Regarding claims 23-25, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Figs. 35A and 36, a recess 76 between the outer edges of the abutting joint surfaces of the sleeve members 1, 2 and a retaining member 77 provided on the ring of the fastener 70 or hinge 60, as claimed in these claims.

Regarding claim 26, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 36, a stopper 64 for holding the first ring 61 of the hinge 60 at a predetermined angle, as claimed in this claim.

Regarding claim 27, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose that the opposite ends of the recess 6 for the gasket 7 are each reduced in width, as claimed in this claim.

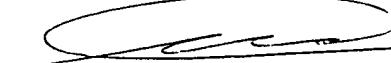
Regarding claim 28, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 4, barriers 65 provided on both side edges of the sleeve members 1, 2, as claimed in this claim.

As such, though there are many differences between the claimed features of the present invention and the teachings of the cited references, the Examiner has not cited any reference relevant to such claims. In fact, the Examiner has not addressed any of these features as being disclosed in either Sasaki, et al. or Nimiya, et al. Accordingly, the aforementioned features as set forth in the above specified claims are deemed to be both novel and unobvious over Sasaki, et al. either alone or in combination with Nimiya, et al. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

As all claims now pending in the application possess the requisite novelty and unobviousness over the prior art of record, Notice of Allowance is now in order. If, for any reason, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken at this time, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 654-5000, so as to overcome any additional issues that may need resolution. If there are any fees to be incurred in connection with this response, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

Respectfully submitted,

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